

State of Alaska FY2006 Governor's Operating Budget

Department of Natural Resources Fire Suppression Activity Component Budget Summary

Component: Fire Suppression Activity

Contribution to Department's Mission

The Division of Forestry's contribution to the Department's mission is to manage wildland fires in the safest, most efficient and cost-effective manner possible, meeting statutory requirements to provide wildland fire protection to all state, municipal and private lands.

Core Services

The Division's Wildland Fire Management Program consists of two components under its statutory responsibility in AS41.15.010 for wildland fires on all state, municipal and private lands in Alaska. This component funds wildland fire suppression operations and closely related activities.

The Division provides rapid and aggressive initial attack on wildland fires consistent with the Alaska Interagency Wildland Fire Management Plan. This will be accomplished through cooperative agreements with federal and local government fire cooperators.

Helicopters, air tankers and light fixed-wing aircraft are contracted from private vendors to provide detection, transportation of initial attack firefighters, and application of fire retardant to wildland fires. Village emergency firefighting crews, incidental emergency firefighters, local government and federal cooperator personnel will be hired in emergency situations to supplement the Division's firefighters.

Note: Performance measures for the Statewide Fire Suppression RDU components are included in the Fire Suppression Preparedness Component.

FY2006 Resources Allocated to Achieve Results

FY2006 Component Budget: \$13,672,900

Personnel:

Full time	0
Part time	0
Total	0

Key Component Challenges

Alaska's population continues to move into the forested areas of the state which makes responding to the rising numbers of urban interface wildland fires one of the key issues facing the Division and its local government cooperators. In 2004 the Division suppressed numerous serious urban interface wildland fires that directly threatened inhabited structures. For the 2004 season, 314 of 398 fires were urban interface. During 2000, Forestry responded to 16 fires that involved structures threatened by wildland fire. In 2001, 230 of the 299 fires in Forestry responsibility areas were urban interface wildland fires. In 2002, 311 of the 336 fires in the state's protection area were urban interface. In the 2003 fire season, 353 of 369 fires were in the urban interface. Geographically, the urban interface fire zone continues to increase as new homes and subdivisions are built.

Length of the fire season has increased significantly, impacting staffing, budget and urban/interface risk. The legislated wildland fire season is May 1st through September 30th annually. However, due to changes in the weather pattern, the Division's initial attack firefighters are normally fighting wildland fires much earlier than the May 1st date. In 2003 the Division responded to 49 fires in March, which was by far the most fire responses in March on record. All of these fires

occurred in the urban interface and several of these early fires threatened homes and other structures directly. On March 12, the Helen fire near Palmer burned 65 acres, destroyed an historical barn and other out buildings, and threatened numerous other homes and businesses in the area. In 2004, Division fire fighters responded to 17 fires prior to May 1, including a 25 acre fire in the heavily populated Mat-Su valley.

Forestry's ICS trained and experienced personnel are increasingly being used for all-risk incident response ranging from the 9/11 response to windstorms, floods, and earthquakes. The state is increasingly relying on their availability in planning disaster or terrorism response. However, the majority of these personnel are 3-5 month seasonal staff, whose seasons are already too short to provide required training and ensure their availability for fires. The increased all-risk workload is falling to the few fire managers who have full time fire management responsibilities. Because of its trained and experienced personnel, Forestry is probably the best choice for many emergency response situations. However, the commitment of staff-months expended annually toward all-risk assignments negatively impact the Division's ability to accomplish the basic wildland fire management missions in the safest, most effective and cost-efficient manner.

Component costs are increasing due to longer seasons, more urban interface wildland fires. 6.5 million acres of forested lands burned in Alaska during the 2004 fire season, which is the most acres burned since fire records have been kept. This is 8.25 times the 10 year average for yearly acres burned. The next highest year was 1950 with 5 million acres recorded. Three of the state's responsibility fires were declared FEMA disaster fires and were eligible for reimbursement of 75% of approved fire suppression cost. This is an effective gauge of how the severe 2004 fire season impacted communities in Alaska. The 2004 fire season will be the most expensive to date with the majority of the costs being attributed to a longer season with the wildland fires threatening human life and structures in the wildland urban interface areas of the state. Approximately 12% of the total number of fires statewide were in limited protection and required no suppression action. However, 91% (424 of this year's 683 fires) of the wildland fires that required suppression action occurred on state responsibility lands resulting in the State of Alaska being required to pay the suppression costs. Five of these wildland fires became costly project fires requiring the assignment of incident management teams to suppress.

Notable in 2004 was the duration of the season. It was necessary to staff several large fires from the third week of June until the beginning of September, a period greater than 10 weeks. This required the constant rotating of firefighting personnel, including incident management teams and suppression crews. Statewide, there were 24 requests for Incident Management Teams between 8 different fires and fire complexes. From mid-June to mid-September the Division of Forestry mobilized approximately 924 individual overhead personnel, twenty-seven Type 1 crews, fifteen type 2 IA crews and 59 smokejumpers from the lower 48. Additionally, 10 engines, 1 infrared mapping aircraft and 5 helicopters were requested by DOF from the lower 48. The Division utilized in-state 16-person Type 2 Emergency Firefighting crews at record levels as the 61 available crews were mobilized at least 3 times each. Five Type 2 and two Type 1 Incident Management teams from the lower 48 were also requested to assist the Division in 2004.

Significant Changes in Results to be Delivered in FY2006

This component will operate at current funding service levels. No significant changes are anticipated at the current funding level.

Major Component Accomplishments in 2004

Fire Program budgeting was previously split in Forest Management and Development and Fire Suppression, and is now in Fire Suppression Activity and Fire Suppression Preparedness.

- Successfully suppressed 98% of the 249 wildland fires in critical protection at 10 acres or less exceeding the goal of 90% and equaling the 2000, 2002, and 2003 fire seasons where the division also successfully suppressed 98% of the wildland fires in critical protection. This measure is highly dependent upon conditions including weather, winds, number of simultaneous fires, etc. This trend supports an outcome of decreased wildland/urban interface fires that reach project fire level, thus saving the state suppression costs and protecting public lives and property.
- Successfully suppressed 96.4% of 331 wildland fires in critical and full protection at 10 acres or less, exceeding the measure of 90%. These urban/ interface fires were suppressed by firefighters in Tok, Fairbanks, Delta Junction, Copper River, McGrath, Anchorage, the Mat-Su Valley, Soldotna and the Haines Areas. This trend supports an

outcome of increased wildland/urban interface fires that require extended and more expensive attack.

- The crew rotation list turned over 3 times as 61 (16-person) EFF village crews filled 156 crew requests on 19 different in-state fires. 1 DOF Type 2 IA crew was mobilized to British Columbia. The state expended more than \$8 Million in EFF wages in CY04. Hiring EFF crews supports an outcome of increased employment for Alaskans in rural areas that have few sources of income as well as cost-effective support of Alaskan fire suppression efforts.
- Provided Air Tanker and Aerial Supervision Module support for 45 days to the State of Oregon through the Northwest Compact. Sharing of resources through participation in the NW Compact provides an outcome of reciprocal assistance when Alaska experiences resource shortages during high levels of fire activity.
- The State provided the Incident Commander, Deputy IC and other key personnel to the Alaska Interagency Incident Management Team, which was assigned to the FEMA managed hurricane recovery effort in Alabama in September of 2004. Participation on National Type I teams provides outcomes of invaluable experience and reciprocating service to Alaskan firefighters, particularly in wildland-urban interface.
- Provided Alaskan aviation vendors with income from thirteen 90-day and one 45-day aircraft contracts for helicopters, air tankers and fixed wing aircraft used to support wildland and wildland/ urban interface fire suppression. Economic support of Alaskan aviation vendors results in an outcome of a healthier Alaskan aviation sector and increased employment.
- Managed and responded to a total of 398 wildland fires in both wildland and wildland/urban interface areas on 134 million protection acres. A diversified outcome effect results in increased employment, increased economic benefit to vendors, and protection of life and property.
- Provided fire weather forecasting 7 days per week during the fire season, providing critical information to managers making decisions to restrict open burning, position firefighters and aircraft in certain areas, and call in more resources. The outcome allows Forestry to preposition initial attack for quick response during high fire danger and take other actions that result in more efficient fire management. The outcome, which provides more efficient fire management, saves the State money.
- Analyzed daily lightning occurrence data to determine areas where wildland fires are most likely to occur. Provided aircraft detection to areas of multiple strikes and provided rapid response to fire starts in areas with high value natural resources and human improvements. The outcome allows Forestry to preposition crews and send aerial detection to areas of high lightning occurrence for quicker initial attack.
- Generated \$17.8 million into the Alaskan economy, including payments to 995 vendors who supplied additional aircraft detection, commodities and supplies during fire suppression activities this season. This major economic influx supports an outcome of increased employment and an increased economic stimulus to the state's economy.
- Purchased firefighting capabilities from the federal government saving the state duplication of services and funding. This supports an outcome of more efficient government.

Statutory and Regulatory Authority

Alaska Statutes - Title 41

Section 41.15.010 - 41.15.170

Section 41.15.200 - 41.15.240

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Fire Suppression Activity Component Financial Summary

All dollars shown in thousands

	FY2004 Actuals	FY2005 Management Plan	FY2006 Governor
Non-Formula Program:			
Component Expenditures:			
71000 Personal Services	7,498.3	3,152.3	3,152.3
72000 Travel	536.5	150.8	150.8
73000 Services	6,635.3	8,464.8	8,464.8
74000 Commodities	1,178.3	1,905.0	1,905.0
75000 Capital Outlay	0.0	0.0	0.0
77000 Grants, Benefits	0.0	0.0	0.0
78000 Miscellaneous	0.0	0.0	0.0
Expenditure Totals	15,848.4	13,672.9	13,672.9
Funding Sources:			
1002 Federal Receipts	7,392.4	5,460.4	5,460.4
1004 General Fund Receipts	7,995.9	6,712.5	6,712.5
1108 Statutory Designated Program Receipts	460.1	1,500.0	1,500.0
Funding Totals	15,848.4	13,672.9	13,672.9

Estimated Revenue Collections

Description	Master Revenue Account	FY2004 Actuals	FY2005 Manageme nt Plan	FY2006 Governor
<u>Unrestricted Revenues</u>				
Unrestricted Fund	68515	480.5	0.0	0.0
Unrestricted Total		480.5	0.0	0.0
<u>Restricted Revenues</u>				
Federal Receipts	51010	7,392.4	5,460.4	5,460.4
Statutory Designated Program Receipts	51063	460.1	1,500.0	1,500.0
Restricted Total		7,852.5	6,960.4	6,960.4
Total Estimated Revenues		8,333.0	6,960.4	6,960.4

**Summary of Component Budget Changes
From FY2005 Management Plan to FY2006 Governor***All dollars shown in thousands*

	<u>General Funds</u>	<u>Federal Funds</u>	<u>Other Funds</u>	<u>Total Funds</u>
FY2005 Management Plan	6,712.5	5,460.4	1,500.0	13,672.9
FY2006 Governor	6,712.5	5,460.4	1,500.0	13,672.9